

# Value of the Team Diversity

**Interview with Roger Chen, C.A.S. Manager. GE Medical Systems**

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With a sales team of 20 individuals, Roger Chen, Distributions Operations Manager of GEMS – C.A.S. Region Caribbean was faced with the same challenge that most of today’s managers face – “how to keep the team focused on common goals, while maintaining individual creativity and accountability. We have to provide leadership and demonstrate GE role model behavior to a group of 16 Distributor organizations throughout Latin America, while meeting the needs of a very diverse customer base in tough economic conditions.” In an interview with Roger, we uncovered his plan to take this challenge and turn it into a developmental opportunity for his team, beginning with having his team participate in entitled a leadership development program developed by Cynthia Kivland, Principal CareerPerformanceStrategies entitled: **“Developing the Leader Within.”**

**What was your first step in making your plan to develop your team?**

I heard about GEMS U several times through e-mails. While accessing the online GEMS U learning and development tools, I took the Kiersey Temperament Sorter assessment test that is used to identify personality and work-style preferences. I immediately recognized the importance of the concept of “type” to improve teamwork and to develop individual leadership skills in a mobility environment and a Six Sigma culture.

**How did you hear about the “Developing the Leader Within” program offered by GEMS U?**

I called the 877 career coaching phone number and contacted Cynthia Kivland. I explained the team as strong, experienced and very diverse both professionally and culturally. She was able to coach me through identifying my teambuilding objectives, indicate programs to help me meet those goals and help me to articulate the specific objectives for this particular training session.

**How did this session help your team?**

The session “*Developing the Leader Within*” was a great success. Team members were given a high-level MBTI assessment, which identified their preferred style of leadership, communication, problem solving, change management and process management. Cynthia then brought the group together for a collective analysis of these characteristics applied to the team as a whole. We learned how to apply this information to engage the minds and efforts of others and to think differently about goals and relationships to people and the organization. Individual and team pitfalls and developmental opportunities were identified and action items listed.

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The MBTI allowed us to reflect individually on our own behavioral preferences and the behaviors we would like to improve. The consultant created an environment that encouraged openness and everyone was willing to share information that would help us all improve. As a team, we have a better understanding of the style preferences of other team members so we can further develop our communication and influence skills, two critical elements of effective leadership. We recently added several new team members and this was a great team building exercise.

### **What was the team's response to the program?**

Getting this team together for a full day commitment is not easy. Because of the time commitment involved, this can be a tough group to present to, with the benchmark being "Why is this information more important than working on the deals I'm closing?" The program was very well received, and with such diverse personalities, it was a very high-energy, fun session. Cynthia was able to read the group dynamics very quickly. She kept the pace quick and the whole group engaged. Her preparation before the training to learn about the team and customize the material to the group was evident. She obviously has a great deal of experience in what she does.

### **Did this program meet your expectations?**

The program exceeded my expectations. As with any training, the effectiveness will only come through reinforcement of the key messages and implementation of the key behaviors into real life situations. From the response I

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have witnessed, the information has been embraced and I have seen individuals continuing to work on their leadership skills using the program material. This shows me there is a willingness to commit and improve and I am certain of long-term benefits. As an ongoing tool, we each have the type preferences for each other. This is great to refer to when we are working through issues that require exceptional understanding and communication. As a follow-up, Cynthia is sending Commitment Reminders to team members to stay focused on their individual action items.

### **What is your next step?**

This program was a huge success and I highly recommend it to other GEMS managers. It was an excellent learning and development opportunity and great for team building and leadership development. I plan to do additional work with Cynthia to reinforce and enhance our team leadership development. It was Crotonville-caliber training delivered on-site at a reasonable cost with virtual and phone coaching follow-up to accelerate the development curve.

If you would like more information on building "leaders within your team" visit our website for a brochure or contact 1.877.60.COACH.

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